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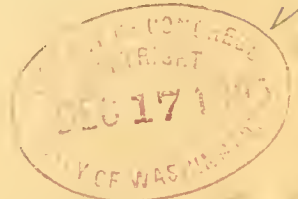
Emancipated Woman...

—OR—

A SCENE FROM REAL LIFE IN THE YEAR 2000

A BURLESQUE IN FOUR ACTS

GIVING THE CAST OF CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, SCENERY,
EXITS AND ENTRANCES, AND STAGE BUSINESS.



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1895:
RAGSDALE & CHASSELL,
LEMARS, IOWA.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

MR. MARIA BROWNSTONE, a domestic slave.
MR. ELIZABETH HERBERT.
MR. FRANCIS GROVER.
MR. WAYUP.
MR. BEACONSTREET.
MR. BLAND.
CHOLLY BROWNSTONE, a charming bud.
MRS. BROWNSTONE, President of the Ladies' Club.
MRS. HERBERT.
MRS. GROVER.
MRS. BEACONSTREET, a gold-bug.
MRS. BLAND, a free silverite.
MRS. WAYUP.
MISS DAISY SMASHEM, a rising young woman.
DUSTY MAUD, a female tramp.

TIME OF PRESENTATION—One hour and fifteen minutes.

COSTUMES.

BROWNSTONE.—*First Act*. Mother Hubbard with apron tied around waist.
Third Act—Black Prince Albert coat with enormous red sleeves of style prevailing at present date. Broad ruffles of same around skirt of coat and bottoms of trousers. *Fourth Act*—An old patched modern suit.
HERBERT.—*First Act*. Short gown over ordinary coat. Shawl over head.
Third Act—Same as Brownstone, with pink sleeves and ruffles. *Fourth Act*—Old suit.
GROVER.—*Third Act*. Same as Herbert and Brownstone, with blue ruffles and sleeves. *Fourth Act*—Old suit. Other male characters in old patched suits with the exception of Wayup, who should be gotten up as gorgeous as possible.
CHOLLY BROWNSTONE.—Little Lord Fauntleroy suit. The ladies all to be dressed in bloomers of exaggerated cut, according to the costumes of the new woman as given in Puck and Judge.
DUSTY MAUD.—Bloomers and large sleeved waist of many colors, much patched, red hair, two or three tomato cans hung at waist, enormous hat with flowers.

NOTE.

All the characters are to be played by men, and the fun will be heightened if the cast is made up among the more prominent business men of the community. Large latitude may be taken in the costuming, the idea being a broad burlesque of the new woman movement.

POSITIONS.

Right means right side of stage facing audience. Left means left side facing audience.

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EMANCIPATED WOMAN,

A Burlesque in Four Acts.



ACT I.

SCENE:—*Kitchen in the Brownstone residence; (right) wash tub and clothes basket; stove (upright) with boiler in, containing clothes; clothes pins in boiler. Cradle or baby carriage containing baby in center. (Left) Table with two chairs. Cupboard containing dishes in left corner of room. Mr. Brownstone engaged in doing the family washing and tending the baby between times.*

BROWNSTONE (soliloquising) My! I do wonder if this will ever come clean. I wish Maria would learn not to keep the towels down at the office until they get so dirty that they will stand alone. Surely there must have been a great change in the last hundred years. Last night after baby was asleep I ran across a book Mrs. Brownstone had been reading—"A Description of Society as it existed in the year 1895." It seems like a dream to think of it. Why it seems that, at that time, men were actually at the head, not only of families, but of the government. But now what a change! Women not only run the government, but they run us too, and we, the former lords of creation, are compelled to attend to domestic affairs and bring up the children, while our wives and their friends while away their time at the clubs discussing financial questions—at least, that's what Maria says—but it seems kind of funny to me how she gets all that chalk on her clothes discussing finance—or they go to the races and bet their last dollar on their favorite horse. (*Bell rings.*) I suppose this is Mr. Beacons-
street, stuck up old thing; I wonder what he wants. I just have not time to go to the door. We are down trodden creatures anyway, with hardly enough clothes to cover us. Why, I have worn this outfit to do the work in for the last five years, and the Lord only knows how much longer I will have to wear it. (*Bell rings.*) There goes that bell again. Well, I just won't go to that door again until Maria gets me something to wear. I suppose the present condition is a great improvement over the past—at least Maria says it is—and under present conditions it is not healthy to dispute with her very much. But sometimes it seems to me that men are getting the worst of it. What with the washing and ironing and getting something to eat (and Maria always growls if things are not just so) and making dresses and tending baby it seems as if the work was never done. (*Door bell.*) Well just let them ring if they want to: I *won't* go to the door. Can't help but think about that book; the men in those days must have had a jolly time, but I don't suppose they appreciated it. People never know when they do have a good thing until it is too late. I guess if we could have that kind of a show now, we would make the most of it. I suppose I ought to be satisfied and not rebel at my lot, but after reading the book I sometimes wish things were the same as they were a hundred years ago. (*Goes to the window.*) There comes Cholly, and—what's that? There is a young woman with him. Dear, dear, that boy is a young gentleman now and just coming out, and all the girls will be after him. Already there's that impertinent Daisy Smashem coming around here—just let me catch her—that's all, not a cent to her name—just an impecunious editor. And

there's that Goldie Croesus; she's such a nice young woman. I quite enjoy her. I wish Cholly liked her a little better, but boys will be boys I suppose.

(Enter Cholly Brownstone—left.)

Where have you been and who was that with you?

CHOLLY. Aw! I was down at the ice cream parlors with Daisy Smashem, don't you know. She bought me four plates of ice cream and it was just too sweet of her, wasn't it papa, and we just had such a jolly time, don't you know.

BROWNSTONE. Down at the ice cream parlors with Daisy Smashem, eh? Don't ever let me hear of your encouraging that young Smashem woman. She's not the kind of a young woman for an innocent boy like you to have anything to do with. You ought to be at home helping me with the work now that we keep no help. There's the breakfast dishes not washed yet and it is pretty nearly time to get lunch ready. Your mother will be home from the office before long and there's more work to do than I know what to do with.

CHOLLY. Dishes, dishes, aw, its always dishes. I don't see, papa, why we can't keep a hired man like Mr. Wayup. My hands are all spoiled now don't you know, with washing dishes.

BROWNSTONE. Mrs. Wayup makes lots of money, Chollie, while your mother has been unfortunate in some of her business ventures lately. Times are hard and collections slow, your mother says, and really, Cholly, you ought to encourage that Goldie Croesus instead of Daisy Smashem.

CHOLLY. But, papa, I don't like Goldie Croesus.

BROWNSTONE. Goldie Croesus is a prosperous young woman and she comes from a good family, is making lots of money, and is said to be a rising woman politically. She is going to take a high place in the government and could give you a luxurious home and a high place in society. Now, don't let me hear any more about Daisy Smashem. If I ever catch that young woman around here I will make it warm for her. Now get into the pantry and wash those dishes.

CHOLLY *(Aside.)* And Daisy is coming around this evening. Wonder how I can get papa out of the way when dear Daisy comes. I know she likes me. Aw, dear. *(Exit—left. Baby supposed to commence to cry. Brownstone stops to rock the cradle and sing to the baby.)*

Enter Dusty Maud—left.

DUSTY MAUD. Say, is dere any of de wimmen folks around de house?

BROWNSTONE *(frightened)* N—noma'am.

DUSTY MAUD. Well, say, I'm hungry and want something to eat, see? And trot out de best you got in de house, too, or I'll clip your whiskers, see?

BROWNSTONE. Y—yes, ma'am. *(Gets loaf of bread from cupboard.)*

DUSTY MAUD. Wot's dis yere givin me? Aint dere any pie in de house? *(Throws bread off stage. Brick dropped off.)*

BROWNSTONE. No—no, ma'am, but—I might find some if you would cut some of that wood out in the back yard.

DUSTY MAUD. *(thoughtily)* I belongs to de Traveling Ladies Federation of Leisure and its against me principles to work. See? *(Exit Dusty Maud.)*

(Enter Mr. Herbert—right.)

HERBERT. Good morning, Brownstone! Not through with your washing yet? I got through with mine a half an hour ago. Say, Brownstone, could you let me have a little baking powder? I knew we were out but Mrs. Herbert always makes such a kick when we get out of anything in the kitchen and she always wants things about right to eat too.

BROWNSTONE. Why good morning, friend Herbert. Yes; I can accommodate you. Where is you wife? Is she at the club?

HERBERT. To be sure she is. She went a short time ago after giving me a good lecture for not having breakfast on time.

BROWNSTONE. So it goes. I thought my wife was pretty hard on me, but I guess we all have to take it about alike. What do you think, Herbert, I have just been reading a book about the state of society a hundred years ago. This book says that at that time the men were the bosses of everything, and even proposed to the women they wanted to marry. What do you think of that? Don't you wish it was the case now?

HERBERT. Really, I don't know. It would be a great responsibility to ask a woman to marry you. We are so used to having the women do all those things. But how are you getting along with your sewing? Do you make your wife's club dresses?

BROWNSTONE. I usually do; but lately I have been so busy putting up fruit and tending the baby that I had to hire a dress maker. Mr. Worth, he helps me, and what do you think, I had to pay him 75c a day and board.

HERBERT. And didn't Mrs. Brownstone make a roar about expense?

BROWNSTONE. She did make a kick but I told her she would drive me to the grave with all this hard work and no time to even take a walk once in a while. She finally relented and agreed to pay Mr. Worth if it did not cost over \$2.50.

HERBERT. Well, I suppose we have got to stand all these things as it will not be real healthy for us if we make a kick.

BROWNSTONE (*In a low and subdued tone as if some one would hear him*). Say, Herbert, I have been thinking if we men could not do something to benefit our condition. What do you think?

HERBERT. I hardly know. If our wives should catch us holding a meeting it would not be very healthy around the house for us for some time.

BROWNSTONE. I know that, but I guess if we are real careful they will not find it out. Suppose you see a few of the neighbors and we will meet down in that old vacant house on Tremont street and they will not suspect what is going on.

HERBERT. All right, I will see them, but we must be awful careful not to get caught.

BROWNSTONE. I must work some scheme to get a night key; guess I will ask my wife for one today.

HERBERT. I must get one too. Good day. (*Exit Herbert.*)

Enter Mrs. Brownstone.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Why, James, what do you mean by getting lunch ready out here in the kitchen with the washing all around?

BROWNSTONE. Well, Maria, I have just too much to do on wash day to waste time getting lunch ready in the dining room.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Won't you ever get the lunch on the table? I have an engagement at the office at 1:30 and have not time to stand around all day.

BROWNSTONE. It is all ready now, Maria; just sit down and I will take up the meat.

MRS. BROWNSTONE (*Sitting down*). My goodness, James, if I were in your place I would get something fit to eat. What's this mess you have here?

BROWNSTONE. That's cream of dried beef.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. That's nice stuff to set before a hungry woman. And, James, these biscuits ought to be called "Sure Death." What do you mean by putting such things on the table?

BROWNSTONE. That last flour you sent up, dear, was no good at all.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Huh! It ought to be good; I paid 50 cents for it. Why don't you have some fried chicken or quail on toast, or almost anything for a little variety?

BROWNSTONE. This is wash day, you know, and I have been in a hurry to get through, so I hope you will excuse the dainties this morning.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. The same old excuse, but I suppose I will have to overlook it again this morning as usual.

BROWNSTONE. By the way, Maria, did you get that piece of silk I asked you to bring up this morning.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Yes, I left it out in the hall.

B. Did you get the pins?

MRS. B. Yes, dear.

B. And the ribbon?

MRS. B. Yes.

B. And Bobby's shoes?

MRS. B. Yes.

B. And the whisk broom?

MRS. B. Yes.

B. And some matches?

MRS. B. Yes; they are with the other bundles.

B. And did you see about coal?

MRS. B. Yes; it will be up tomorrow.

B. And the woman to see the grate in the dining room?

MRS. B. Yes; she is coming as soon as she can.

B. Did you see Smith about the Gentlemen's Aid Society meeting?

MRS. B. Yes, and he said he'd come.

B. And—oh, yes—did you get a new shovel for the kitchen stove?

MRS. B. No, no, no, I forgot it.

B. What did you do that for? You know we need that shovel and I told you about it the very first thing when you went down town this morning. I do think women are the most forgetful and careless creatures that ever lived. Did you mail that letter for me?

MRS. B. No, I didn't. Now, James, I am going down town (*Rises*) and I shall be home to dinner at six and I shall bring some friends with me and I want you to hustle around and get the washing done and clear up this kitchen, for it is a disgrace the way it looks now. And that baby, he looks like a fright; dress him up so that he will not disgrace his mother and don't forget to have a good dinner.

B. Yes, Maria, my dear: er-er say, Maria, do you think you could spare a little money today?

MRS. BROWNSTONE. What, again James? Why, I gave you your housekeeping allowance on—let me see—Thursday, wasn't it? Really, James, some of you men seem to think we women are made of money.

BROWNSTONE. You forget, my dear, there's Cholly's new party suit to come out in, you know.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Confound it, there's always something for Cholly.

B. You must remember, my dear, that if Cholly is ever to take any place socially he must be dressed like the rest of the young men. Then there's the water rent and gas bill, and the children both need new shoes.

MRS. B. Didn't I give you the money for that?

B. No, dear; that was for the flannel for Milly's warm petticoats I am making. Besides, dear, don't be angry, will you? I saw such a cheap pair of trousers at the clearance sale yesterday that I couldn't resist buying them and you know I've hardly had a rag to my back.

MRS. B. Always your cry, James. Really your extravagance in dress is something sinful. It's a pity you haven't got to go and earn the money. You'd know its value then. Here's 50c. and for goodness sake do try and pay some of your household bills with it and buy provisions and not trifle the money away on a lot of trash. Times are hard now and money scarce, besides I must have a new dress.

B. There's a good, darling wife; let me help my Maria on with her coat. Say, Maria, can't I have a night key?

MRS. B. Night key! What earthly use can you have for a night key? Sunday evenings I always attend church, the Daughters of Rebekah meet Monday night, and there's no one else who can fill my position. Then there's the Pierian club which meets Tuesday evenings and I must go to

that. Wednesday evening there's the Pythian Sisters. Then I can't miss the Woman's club Thursday evening, they are studying Shakespeare, you know. Then there is the Friday club and I must do my part in that, and on Saturday night there is the Eastern Stars and I certainly must fill my position there. Night key! Indeed, you must stay home and take care of the baby. (*Substitute names of local societies.*)

B. Will you be out late tonight?

Mrs. B. Can't say, I'm sure. Have got a lot to attend to today and I shall drop into the club for an hour or so after, so it will probably be late. So long. (*Exit—left.*)

B. If Maria doesn't spend a little more time at home I shall go home to paw. (*Weeps. Fires bottle for baby and starts to feed it.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.—LADIES CLUB ROOM.

SCENE.—*Room should contain table and easy chairs, settees and other luxuries. When curtain rises ladies are all seated around and smoking cigarettes, taking things easy as behooves the lords of creation. Present, Mrs. Brownstone, Mrs. Herbert, Mrs. Grover, Mrs. Wayup, Mrs. Bland, Mrs. Beaconstreet. Mrs. Brownstone is the leader.*

Mrs. BROWNSTONE. Now, ladies, what shall be the subject of discussion today?

Mrs. HERBERT. I would suggest that we discuss the question of government finances and their relation to free silver.

Mrs. GROVER. I understand Mrs. President Dole has just called an international convention for the discussion of the silver question.

Mrs. WAYUP. Yes, but I understand also that Mrs. Secretary Thurston has called the president down. The secretary says the government revenues are ample and that we do not need any more silver in circulation.

Mrs. BEACONSTREET (*A gold bug*) That speech of Mrs. Senator Hill in congress last week was a great one: she knocked the pegs clear out from under the silver advocates, and showed beyond question that gold is the only real money.

Mrs. BLAND (*A strong silver advocate.*) I read that speech and think it a great fake; in fact, there was a book written more than a hundred years ago when the men were running the government. This book was called "Coin's Financial School," and while I never had much of an opinion of the ability of the men to run the government, I think this man "Coin" was a wonderfully smart fellow. At any rate if he was not he fooled a great many people in his day. I think that we ought to have lots of silver money and that Mrs. President Dole should do all in her power to put more silver into circulation.

Mrs. BROWNSTONE. My judgment is that the hard times now existing cannot be traced to the lack of silver in circulation, but is directly caused by the extravagance of our husbands in running our domestic affairs. Why only a few days ago my husband had the temerity to hire a dressmaker to help him make my club dresses without consulting me. Of course I kicked but finally told him I would pay the bill this time if it was not more than two dollars and a half, but he must never do it again.

Mrs. HERBERT. Such extravagance will ruin the country if it is kept up.

Mrs. GROVER. My husband is pretty good about those things. Only last week he worked until 12 o'clock every night on one of my dresses. I happen to know because I was out to a little poker club we have just organized. You see it is a new thing and the women in our neighborhood are very enthusiastic. One or two of them dropped a big sum last night and I am afraid they will be a little skeery next time, but they have got great nerve. One of them bet all her loose change, then after that was gone she took off her watch and bet that. She lost and then pulled off her shawl, bet that, that was soon gone, then she borrowed a mackintosh and went home as happy as a clam. It is a good thing our husbands do not dare to make a kick about these things. If they did it would be lively for us.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Did any of you attend the West End theatre Tuesday night. They have a great star there. His stage name is John Smith, a very rare name at the present time. I tell you he is creating a great furor. His strong point is in illustrating the conditions of the last century. He takes occasion to roast the women of the present day pretty hard for their extravagance and dissipation. Mr. Brownstone wanted to go but I told him the play was not a proper one for him to attend. The truth is I was afraid he would catch on to something that would make him a worse kicker than he is now, and the Lord knows he is bad enough as it is. I guess he won't be likely to go as I know he has not got money enough to buy a ticket.

MRS. HERBERT. I don't think it is a good plan to allow these men to go to theatres and such places very much. It has a tendency to demoralize them and make them less domestic.

MRS. GROVER. Right you are, Mrs. Herbert. I tell my husband that I am perfectly capable of attending to all outside matters, including shows, and all I ask of him is to attend strictly to his domestic affairs. He kicks a little once in a while but I manage to hold him level.

MRS. WAYUP. By the way, did you hear that Miss Samanthy Ketchum had just proposed to Mr. Dodger and been rejected? What do you think of a man who would reject such a proposal? Hasn't he got lots of nerve?

MRS. BEACONSTREET. Well, I don't know as I blame him much. Miss Ketchum has got lots of stamps, but she is as homely as a hedge fence and has a squint eye. Perhaps Mr. Dodger thought he would rather run the risk of dying a single man than to marry her.

MRS. GROVER. Now, ladies, I think Mr. Dodger was right. I admire his nerve. *(Arises from her chair and rings the bell. The waiter answers the bell and asks the ladies what they will have. Each lady orders what she wants. The waiter soon returns with glasses on a tray and places them on the table. Mrs. Grover now proposes that we drink to the health of Mr. Dodger, a man who has the nerve to refuse a proposal of marriage. Ladies rise. Curtain falls while they are drinking.)*

ACT III.

SCENE:—*Sitting room in the Brownstone residence. Door, center. Fireplace left of door. Table and three chairs, left. Sofa, right. Children's clothing scattered about the room. Enter Brownstone.*

BROWNSTONE. Dear me! I must sit down and rest a minute. By the time I get that baby asleep at night I am that fagged out I can hardly move. And then that dinner. I was that flustered when Maria brought up those friends of hers. I do hope everything went off all right. There was no cream for the mayonaisse dressing so I had to use some sour milk I had on hand. I don't believe Maria knew the difference, though. Then the potatoes were a little scorched. Maria looked daggers at me about that, but she had the grace to keep quiet for once. But that would have been all right if the baby had not upset the gravy in Mrs. Wayup's lap. I was that mortified—oh dear, dear! I wish Maria would stop bringing people up to dinner on wash day. She is so inconsiderate about that. *(Door bell rings.)* Oh dear! that bell has been ringing all day. I wonder who it is now.

Enter Herbert.

HERBERT. Good evening, Brownstone. I just dropped in with that sugar I borrowed day before yesterday.

BROWNSTONE. Oh, is that you Herbert? Just take a seat. Maria has gone to the club and Cholly is out to a tea party and won't be home for a little while, so I am all alone. How are the children?

HERBERT. I have just been having a dreadful time with those children. Nellie is that head-strong and unruly I can't do anything with her. She is just like her mother. Elizabeth was always that way.

BROWNSTONE. Well, I don't know what I am going to do with Cholly. He is just that infatuated with the girls that he is no good around the house at all. He leaves me to wash the dishes and spends his time fixing

his clothes and curling his hair; and that Smashem girl keeps coming around, and I know Cholly will just worry the life out of me, but I just won't have that young woman around. (*Door bell rings*) There goes that bell again. I wonder if that is Miss Croesus—and Cholly is away too.

Enter Mr. Grover.

Ah! Good evening. Mr. Grover, so glad you came. (*Aside*) Old hypocrite, wish he'd go home; I'm just tired to death.

GROVER. Good evening, Mr. Brownstone. I just got Esther to sleep; poor thing, she is just cutting teeth and is so restless. Thank fortune, Ruth goes to sleep early. I just came in for a moment, can't stay a minute—oh, no, but just wanted to ask if you had heard the terrible story about Mr. and Mrs. Hardecash?

BROWNSTONE. No, what is it? Do have a cup of tea while you tell it.

GROVER. Thanks, I will. Why, Mr. Beaconstreet told me that Mr. Wayup told him that Mr. Slowpay said that Mr. Hardecash was suing for a divorce from Mrs. Hardecash on the ground of desertion.

HERBERT. Well, I don't blame her for deserting him; he is the most slovenly housekeeper in the town. The children are always dirty and Mrs. Hardecash just looks terrible and I believe its because her liver is out of order from his poor cooking.

BROWNSTONE. Well, then she can take something for it. But I don't think its her liver at all. Maria says that Mrs. Hardecash gambles terribly on the board of trade and I just hope that Hardecash will make it warm for her. Have another cup of tea, Mr. Herbert?

HERBERT. Don't care if I do.

BROWNSTONE. By the way, you must not breathe a word of it to a soul. I would not have her know it for the world, but they do say that Mrs. Gresham is loosing her mind.

HERBERT. } No?
GROVER. }

BROWNSTONE. Yes, they say she is doing the most unheard of things. They do say that she has just recently bought her husband two new suits of clothes, and that the way she squanders money on him is just scandalous.

HERBERT. There must be something wrong or she never would do that.

GROVER. Well, really, I can't stay a minute longer. I must hurry back and get my bread sponge ready.

BROWNSTONE. Oh, don't hurry away.

GROVER. Yes, I must go.

BROWNSTONE. So glad you came in: good night, do come again soon. (*Exit Mr. Grover.*)

BROWNSTONE. Hope he won't come in again for a month. I just detest him, always prying into other people's affairs: told Mr. Beaconstreet the other day that Maria was going to fail in business—and Beaconstreet came right over and told me about it.

HERBERT. Well, that's just like Beaconstreet. Every time he hears anything unpleasant about any one he just has to go and tell that person all about it. He's a regular old cat. Hello! You have been having some callers, haven't you? Mr. A. Penelope Wayup, dear me, does he call on you? They tell me the extravagance in that household is just awful. Have you got your spring housecleaning done yet?

BROWNSTONE. No, and I just hate to commence it too. Maria always makes such a fuss at that time and Cholly grumbles so when the parlor is torn up, and we are going to have to have that room papered too, and it will make an awful mess. Have you got your house cleaned yet?

HERBERT. No, I have been too busy with the spring sewing. I have had to make everything over for the children out of old stuff because money is too scarce. Elizabeth says, to get anything new this year. Well, I must be getting back; I left the baby in the bath tub and he may take cold.

BROWNSTONE. Sorry you can't stay longer. Do come in soon again and bring your sewing with you and spend the afternoon.

HERBERT. Yes, I will: you come and see me real soon.

BROWNSTONE. Yes I will: now you come and see me. don't forget.

HERBERT. Yes, I won't. Well, good-bye. I must go: do come soon.

BROWNSTONE. Good-bye. (*Exit Herbert*)

BROWNSTONE (*gathering up clothes in room*) Well, I shall be glad to get to bed tonight. I wish Cholly would come home. I don't like to have that boy out so late at night alone.

Enter Cholly Brownstone.

CHOLLY. (*Aside*) Aw dear, now I must get papa out of the way. Daisy Smashem is coming and papa must not see her. Aw, I know what I'll do, don't you know. (*Aloud*) Say, papa?

BROWNSTONE. Is that you Cholly? So glad you have come.

CHOLLY. Old Mr. Hardup is very sick and wants to know if you can't go down to his house and stay with him a while.

BROWNSTONE. Why, that's just too bad. I'll go right over there. Its a long way but in such a case I must not hesitate. and I think I'll take along a little camphor and some painkiller and a box of Dr. Cureall's pills. Now, Cholly, just get me the hot water bag and see if there is some mustard. May be if I get a good hot mustard plaster on and get him good and sore outside he won't know that he feels so bad inside. And I must not forget the sarsaparilla for that tired feeling that comes in the spring. Now, Cholly, you look after the baby and if I shouldn't get back soon get your mother's dressing gown and slippers ready for her: she will be tired when she gets home.

CHOLLY. Yes, papa. (*Exit Brownstone*) There she comes now. Wonder if I am all right. (*Steps to looking glass*) Yes, I aw, guess I'll do.

Enter Daisy Smashem.

DAISY. Good evening, Mr. Brownstone.

CHOLLY. Why, good evening, Miss Smashem. Come in and sit down. Papa has just gone out to see a sick man, but will be back in a little while. (*Pause*) Its a lovely evening, isn't it?

DAISY. Yes, beautiful, but these spring rains will be such a good thing. (*Pause*) Is your mother at home this evening?

CHOLLY. No, she went down to the club and won't be home till late: she never is.

DAISY. Say, I'm awfully glad you are alone. We have the field all to ourselves, haven't we? By the way, I brought something around for you: I left it out in the hall. Just excuse me a moment and I will get it. (*Goes out into the hall*)

CHOLLY. Wonder why she wants to see me alone? Isn't she just splendid?

Re enter Daisy with bouquet.

DAISY. Here are a few blossoms I thought you might like. Father grows so many we hardly know what to do with them. I arranged them specially for you.

CHOLLY. Oh! Miss Smashem; that was just too lovely of you: aren't they sweet? I do so love flowers: they are just too sweet for anything.

DAISY. No, there is something else that is incomparably sweeter even than the flowers that bloom in the spring. Can you guess what it is?

CHOLLY. No—I think not.

DAISY. It is your own sweet self.

CHOLLY. Oh, Miss Smashem!

DAISY. Yes, Cholly—I may call you Cholly, may I not?

CHOLLY. Y—yes.

DAISY. Cholly, listen to me. Ever since I first met you I have been irresistibly attracted to you. I have stolen away from the office in the hopes of catching a glimpse of you as you flitted about the house doing your house work. Oh, Cholly! Now that we are alone, I cannot wait longer before telling you that I love you.

CHOLLY. Oh, Miss Smashem! This—this is so sudden.

DAISY. Call me Daisy: don't blast my hopes by a cold and formal Miss Smas'em. You will call me Daisy, won't you?

CHOLLY. Y—yes, Daisy.

DAISY. Oh, what if I were to tell you all that is in my heart. You must have seen it long ere this. I know that I am not worthy of you, but I will try my best to make you a happy husband. I cannot offer you a luxurious home, nor a carriage nor an opera box—like Goldie Groesus—yet I believe I can give you a comfortable home. I have just been made managing editor of the Daily Inquisitor and stand a chance to become editor-in-chief. Oh, Cholly! Don't keep me in this awful suspense: tell me that I may hope to call you mine.

CHOLLY. Oh, Daisy, you must really give me time to think it over. I cannot answer now. What would papa say? And Oh, Daisy! I am so young, you must ask mama.

DAISY. If your mama consents, Cholly, will you be mine? Just give me the one little word that will make you mine forever. Oh, my darling! Will you say the little word?

CHOLLY. Y—yes, Daisy.

DAISY. My darling.

CHOLLY. But, Daisy, you must promise me one thing, won't you, dearest?

DAISY. I will promise you anything. What is it, my own?

CHOLLY. You will quit smoking, won't you?

DAISY. Yes—when we are married.

CHOLLY. Oh! You dear delightful old girl—you may kiss me: but, Daisy, will you always love me?

DAISY. Forever: how can you doubt it?

CHOLLY. Oh, won't that be lovely: and, Daisy, you won't. Oh, tell me you won't say anything about the good pies your father used to make, will you?

DAISY. No, my sweetest one, no.

CHOLLY. Nor stay late at the club or lodge?

DAISY. No, my own, my ownest own: I will be home by eight o'clock every night.

CHOLLY. Oh, you are just too sweet. And, Daisy, you will build the fires in the morning, won't you?

DAISY. Always: and you shall never have to do any of the drudgery about the house and you shall always keep a hired man and have plenty of leisure to follow your favorite accomplishments and you shall have all the money I earn.

CHOLLY. And you shall always be true to me and we shall be so happy. But, Oh! Daisy, what will mama say?

DAISY. Oh, we can fix it up with her all right. Let us take a stroll in the beautiful moonlight and arrange a plan of campaign with your mama. *(Exit Cholly and Daisy)*

Enter Brownstone

BROWNSTONE. I didn't think a son of mine would ever decieve me this way. Mr. Hardup was all right and I have had that long walk for nothing and I am all out of breath. I wonder if Daisy Smas'em—Oh! what a responsibility it is for a father to see his sons advantageously married off. Well, I suppose I must get the darning done. I just mend, mend, all the time. I wonder where my thimble is: well, well, that is funny: I wonder where it could have got to. Now just look at that *(holding up stocking)* I wish I could impress it upon Maria's mind that if she would change her stockings twice a week instead of once it would make a great difference in the mending.

(Enter Mrs. Brownstone. -Topsy)

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Say, James—hic—I have been down at the office at work and I am all tired—hic—out.

BROWNSTONE. Yes, Maria, you look all tired out. I know how you have been working and I'd just think you'd be ashamed of yourself when I

have to slave all the time to keep things going and do the washing. while you go down to the elub and make a beast of yourself. And I am that worried about everything I don't know what to do. There's the baby to look after all the time and he's cutting teeth now and is just as cross as can be. There is Cholly and I don't know what I will do with him. I suppose he's out with that Daisy Smashem now somewhere mooning around. If you would take a little responsibility about the house once in a while, I would not be so worn out.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Why, James,—hie—let the young folks have a good time. Daisy Smashem is a good fellow. so am I—hie—a good fellow. We're all good fellows. Daisy is a member of our club and its all right.

BROWNSTONE. I should think you would have a little ambition about our Cholly, and not want him to marry somebody without a cent to her name.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Well, I'll see that's all right and don't say another word about it.

Enter Cholly and Daisy.

DAISY. Great Scott! Here's your mother. Let me out.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Young woman—hie—come here. I understand that you are coming around here after Cholly.

DAISY. Y—yes, Mrs. Brownstone. Cholly just confessed tonight that he loves me and we are going to ask your consent.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. All right, young woman, you can have him. Now Cholly, go and talk to your father, and I guess he will be all right. You consent to this, James, and I'll never drink—hie—another drop.

BROWNSTONE. You promise that, Maria, and I'll—I give my consent but I did want Cholly to make a good match.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Now then, you young folks, you'd better say good night in the hall; and, Daisy, you can come down to the office in the morning and we'll fix things up. *(Exit Cholly and Daisy.)*

BROWNSTONE. Well, Maria, I must go and see if the children are all right. *(Exit Brownstone—Center)*

MRS. BROWNSTONE. All right, James. Ah, shay, but we had a great time at the elub tonight; but, oh shay, what a head I'll have in the morning. I guess when that door comes around again I'll go to bed. *(Scream heard off.)*

(Enter Brownstone frantically.)

BROWNSTONE. Oh, Maria! there's a woman in the house—I know there is. Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do? *(Retires to sofa hysterically.)*

(Enter Dusty Maud who is hustled out by Mrs. Brownstone as curtain falls)

ACT IV.

SCENE—*Vacant house on Tremont street. This should show a destitute room with no chairs or other furniture. The men should come in in a scarred sort of a way as though they had done something they were ashamed of and were afraid they would be found out. They keep watching and listening till they hear the ladies coming in. The ladies, retiring from the club, see the light, and rush in without ceremony.*

(Enter Mr. Brownstone and Mr. Herbert)

BROWNSTONE. Well, Herbert, did you see those other men about coming here tonight?

HERBERT. Yes, I saw several of them and some of them will be here after a while, but they are so afraid their wives will find it out that they hardly dare to come.

BROWNSTONE. Well, I don't know as we can blame them much, as if they do get caught they will catch it for a while at home. I tell you what it is, Herbert, things are getting pretty tough. I have been working night and day lately trying to keep things in shape around the house, but with tending the baby, getting the meals, and doing all the sewing, I can't hardly have time to sleep, and my wife, it seems as though she becomes

more overbearing and unreasonable every day. She is eternally finding fault with the way things are done. I'll tell you what I think, but you must never breathe a word to any one—I think she has lost some money playing poker lately. She is all the time kicking about hard times and telling how scarce money is and finding fault about the house expenses, but I tell you what it is, Herbert, I have squeezed everything down fine at the house. I make a dollar go a great ways, but I can't always stand this. I shall break down one of these days and then what will my wife do?

HERBERT. Oh, I suppose she will do as the rest do—when one husband is gone look around and find another one. But hark, here comes someone. *(Opens the door softly and Mr. Wayup and Mr. Grover enter. All look scared and are peering round as if afraid someone would discover what they were doing.)*

BROWNSTONE. Good evening, gentlemen; I hope you left your children all right. How did you manage to get away?

WAYUP. Well, to tell the truth I had a hard time to get away. My wife, she goes every night to that new poker club. She has gone wild over it, and I got a friend of mine (a man who has only two children to take care of) to come over and stay a little while: I told him I would not be gone long.

GROVER. Well, I had to do a little lying to get away and if my wife ever finds it out she will take my hide right off. I told her I was going to visit a sick friend.

BROWNSTONE. Well, I guess you didn't lie much for I guess you are visiting several sick friends. But listen! I think I hear someone. *(Opens the door softly and looks out. Mr. Beaconstreet and Mr. Bland soon appear, coming in out of breath and seeming badly frightened.)*

BROWNSTONE. Well, my friends, did you have a hard time getting here?

BEACONSTREET. I should say we did. We were coming down on the shady side of the street, and who should we see but Mrs. Beaconstreet and Mrs. Bland just coming out of a cafe. They were on their way to the poker club and stopped into Mrs. Skinner's cafe for a social drink, but we run like steers and I guess they didn't see us.

BLAND. No, I guess they didn't. If they had I should have got a going over that would last me a month. My wife is a holy terror when she gets started.

BROWNSTONE. I guess they are all about alike, but I don't suppose there will be any more here, so we may as well come to business. Mr. Herbert and I were talking matters over a few days ago and we thought perhaps if a few of us would get together and discuss the subject we might hit upon some plan by which we could benefit our condition.

GROVER. The Lord knows there is need enough of it: we are a lot of down-trodden critters, but under the present conditions, what can we do? We are not allowed to vote or have any voice in the government: we have to stay at home and take care of the children and do all the house work, to say nothing of the sewing and making dresses for our wives to wear to the club and elsewhere. Mr. Brownstone, have you any plan to suggest? I will go in for most anything that promises relief, but we want to be very careful or our wives will find it out, and if they do we shall be likely to get a touch of what we imagine exists in the lower regions.

BROWNSTONE. How would it do for us to agree to go home and after a few days (we must not do it too quick or they will suspect something) tell our wives that we must have at least one night in a week to ourselves, and that we must have a little money once in a while, say a dollar a week or something like that? Do you think that will be asking too much?

BEACONSTREET. No, I don't, but I am afraid if I should ask my wife for a dollar a week she would make such a howl that I would not be able to sleep for a month. Why, I haven't had a dollar for three months: just look at these clothes, I have had them five years and don't even have time to sew up the holes. Just look at them, will you?

BLAND. Mine are about the same. I wish we could get a little more of that free silver that we hear our wives talking about.

BROWNSTONE. If we could get our wives to agree to let us have one evening in a week to ourselves it will be a big thing. We could get together

then and have a little social chat, and for the time forget our troubles. Suppose we try once to get an allowance of a dollar a week and one evening to ourselves. What say you?

WAYUP. Well, I don't know but your suggestion is a good one. It don't seem as though that was asking a great deal, but since our wives got to going to that new poker club they are worse than ever. Tell you what it is, my wife makes it pretty sultry round the house sometimes when she comes home. We have to all stand from under till she gets sobered up. I am afraid our wives will get to drinking awfully if they keep this poker club going. I don't believe they will give us a dollar a week or a night out once a week the way things are now.

GROVER. My opinion is, gentlemen, that we had better go pretty slow about asking them for money till they get over this poker craze.

HERBERT. Tell you what it is, gentlemen, I am a little skeery myself about it. Our friend Brownstone here has got considerable nerve: besides he knows pretty well how to get on the good side of that wife of his. Tell you what let's do. Let Brownstone try the scheme on his wife first and if he succeeds we can all try it. If he fails there is no show for the rest of us. Brownstone was telling me about a book he read the other day: I have thought a good deal about it since. It was written over a hundred years ago. It was published in a town they called LeMars, in a state they called Iowa, in the United States of America. At that time men were the bosses: they did all the business, handled all the cash, proposed to the women they wanted to marry, smoked cigars, drank beer, and had a good time generally. Sometimes I wish it was so now, but it would be an awful responsibility to ask a woman to marry you. Don't you think so, Grover?

GROVER. It would take nerve, but I guess if we were used to it we could do it, but let us meet here again next Tuesday night if we can get away and see how Brownstone comes out with his wife.

(Just as Mr. Grover ceases speaking, the ladies rush in. Mrs. Brownstone acts as spokesman for the ladies and Mr. Herbert answers for the gentlemen. The gentlemen all gather in a group as though they were badly frightened. Mrs. Brownstone advances from the group of ladies.)

MRS. BROWNSTONE. Well, gentlemen, what does all this mean? What have you got to say for yourselves?

HERBERT. *(Stepping forward)* Well, ladies, we thought we would get together here and discuss some of our troubles. We think we are having a hard time and not many privileges. We have decided to ask our wives to allow us one night in a week to ourselves and a dollar a week for spending money. Now, ladies, do you think that is too much? Have not we worked faithfully and tried to save all we could? I appeal to you in the name of justice and on behalf of the gentlemen here assembled to grant our request.

MRS. BROWNSTONE. All right, gentlemen, I think you have a pretty hard time and your request seems very reasonable. *(Turns to ladies.)* Ladies, I move we grant their request. What say you?

LADIES. *(In chorus.)* Yes, yes, we'll grant it. And let's go home. *(Each lady takes her husband's arm and marches to the front of the stage. Curtain falls.)*

THE END.

NOTE.—Use name of town in which play is given in place of LeMars.

Emancipated Woman . . .

—OR—

A SCENE FROM REAL LIFE IN THE YEAR 2000

A BURLESQUE IN FOUR ACTS

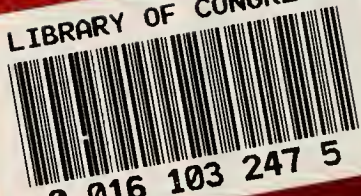
GIVING THE CAST OF CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, SCENERY,
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